

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:
Jeff Estensen, Area Management Biologist
Dayna Green, Asst. Area Management Biologist
Phone: (907) 949-1320
Fax: (907) 949-1830

Lower Yukon Area Office
P.O. Box 127
Emmonak, Alaska 99581
Date Issued: 8/13/12
Time: 6:00 p.m.

2012 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 22

Fall Update # 4, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Fall Season Assessment

The estimated cumulative fall chum salmon total run size through August 12, based on run reconstruction, is 518,000 fish. This is above the historical median of 345,500 fish for that date. The drift test fishery projects at Emmonak and Mountain Village corroborate the timing and relative passage strength estimated by the Pilot Station sonar project. The projected 2012 fall chum salmon run size through August 12, based on early to median run timing, is a range between 800,000 and 1.0 million fish.

The first pulse of fall chum salmon entered the lower Yukon River on July 17 and was estimated to be 122,000 fish in size. Two additional pulses entered the lower Yukon River on July 25 and July 31 and were estimated to 142,000 and 35,500 fish in size. A fourth pulse, which entered the river on Aug 5, was approximately 39,000 fish in size. This past week, fall chum salmon have entered the Yukon River in low numbers, likely because of warm sunny weather and calm winds at the river mouth. These lulls in fall chum salmon entry are not uncommon. It is expected that numbers will pick up during the upcoming week.

Coho salmon are entering Yukon River however it is early in their run. The cumulative passage by the Pilot Station sonar project through August 12, based on run reconstruction, is approximately 19,500 fish, which is below the historical median of 27,000 fish for that date.

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Drift Test Fishing – YDFDA, ADF&G

The cumulative CPUE for fall chum salmon through August 12 was 1,234.0, which is above the historical median of 713.4 for that date. The cumulative CPUE through August 12 for coho salmon was 57.4, which is below the historical median of 103.6 for that date.

Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing - Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council and BSFA

The cumulative CPUE for fall chum salmon through August 12 was 677.5, which is below the historical median of 1,254.8 for that date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon through August 12 was 58.4, which is below the historical median of 173.0 for that date.

Pilot Station Sonar Project - ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through August 12 is approximately 346,000 fish, which is above the median passage of 317,000 fish for that date. The cumulative coho salmon passage through August 12 is approximately 12,000 fish, which is below the median passage of 23,200 fish for that date.

Rapids Test Fish Wheel Project - Zuray

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE through August 12 is approximately 3,300 fish, which is near the historical median of 3,500 fish for that date. The cumulative CPUE based on the adjusted water level is also near the historical median for that date.

Chandalar Sonar Project - USFWS

The project began operations on August 8. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through August 12 is approximately 3,300 fish, which is above the average passage of 2,500 fish for that date.

Sheenjek Sonar Project - ADF&G

The project began operations on August 9. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through August 12 is approximately 470 fish, which is below the average passage of 700 fish for that date.

Eagle Sonar Project - ADF&G

The cumulative Chinook salmon passage at Eagle sonar is estimated to be approximately 33,300 through August 12, which is below the average of 54,900 for this date. The preliminary projection at Eagle sonar for Chinook salmon passage is approximately 34,000 to 35,000. A passage of this size would be below the Interim Management Escapement Goal of 42,500 to 55,000 adopted by the joint US-Canada Yukon River Panel and would not provide for Canadian harvest share levels specified in the Treaty Agreement.

Salcha River Tower - BSFA

The cumulative count for Chinook salmon through August 12 is approximately 7,000. The escapement goal of 3,300 – 6,500 for Chinook in the Salcha River has been achieved. The cumulative count for summer chum salmon is approximately 33,600 fish which is above the median of 28,100 for this date.

Stock Identification

Fall chum salmon genetic samples processed from July 25 through August 2 (pulse 2) passage past Pilot Station sonar indicate that stocks represent approximately 5%, 50%, and 24% for Tanana, Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), and Mainstem Canada respectively. Summer chum salmon made up approximately 21% of the fish sampled during that time period.

Age Composition

The fall chum salmon age composition from the 6" LYTF drift nets through August 11 was 0.6% age-3, 71.4% age-4, 24.8% age-5, and 3.2% age-6 fish. The average age-4 fish is 62.8% for this date and average age-5 fish 36.1%. The sample size was 785 fish for ages and 795 for gender. Females contributed 50.9% to the samples, which is below the average of 56.2%.

The combined fall chum salmon age composition from commercial harvest periods in District 1 (through August 5) was 77% age-4, 20% age-5, and 3.0% age-6 fish. The sample size was 556 fish for ages and 560 for gender. The proportion of females in the commercial catch samples was 60.1%.

Fall Season Management

In accordance with the Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, a total run ranging from 800,000 to 1.0 million fish is adequate for escapement needs, full subsistence opportunity, and has a surplus available for other uses. Subsistence fishing is now on the full regulatory schedules in the lower and middle river. The middle and upper sections of Subdistrict 5-D will go to their full regulatory schedule of 24-hours per day, 7 days per week effective 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 15.

There have been no commercial openings in Districts 1 and 2 since August 9 because of the low number of fall chum salmon entering the river. Managers will consider additional opportunities dependent upon inseason assessment. Fishermen should be aware that commercial periods may be announced with short notice.

Fall Commercial Salmon Fishing

Through August 12, eight fall commercial fishing periods have been announced in District Y-1 six periods in District Y-2, one period in Subdistrict 4-A, and one period in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C. Additional commercial fishing periods will be dependent upon inseason run strength assessment and market interest.

Preliminary harvest information for District Y-1:

Period #8: District Y-1 Set Net Only Area, 12 hours (10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. August 9), remainder of District Y-1, 9 hours (1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. August 9).

4,284 fall chum/29,111 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.), 2,944 coho/18,646 lbs. (\$1.00/lb.), Incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon

The cumulative harvest for Y-1 through August 12 is 100,235 fall chum and 6,037 coho salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 59 fish.

Preliminary harvest information for District Y-2:

Period #6: District Y-2, 9 hours (12:00 noon until 9:00 p.m. August 7).

15,039 fall chum/104,709 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.), 1,682 coho/9,678 lbs. (\$1.00/lb.), Incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon.

The cumulative harvest for Y-2 through August 12 is 71,977 fall chum and 3,162 coho salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 33 fish.

Preliminary harvest information for Subdistrict 4-A:

Period #1: Subdistrict 4-A, 82 hours (8:00 a.m. August 9 until 6:00 p.m. August 12).
179 fall chum, 0 coho, Incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon.

Preliminary harvest information for Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C:

Period #1: Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, 120 hours (6:00 p.m. August 14 until 6:00 p.m. August 19).
No harvest information available.

Summer Commercial Salmon Fishing

Through August 12, six summer season commercial fishing periods have occurred in District 6. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest in District 6 through August 12, is approximately 3,200 summer chum salmon.

Period #7: 6:00 p.m. Monday, August 13, until 12:00 noon Wednesday, August 15, to target summer chum salmon. The 42-hour commercial salmon fishing period will coincide with the District 6 subsistence and personal use fishing time.

Subsistence Salmon Fishing

Coastal District: The Coastal District is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Districts 1, 2, 3: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

The Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 4-A (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A is currently open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays to 6:00 p.m. Sundays. Use of drift gillnets to harvest fall chum salmon is allowed in that portion of Subdistrict 4-A from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point during open subsistence fishing periods.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby. Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Sundays to 6:00 p.m. Fridays.

In District 4, fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open

subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing in the Koyukuk River is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays.

Subdistrict 5-D has been divided into three separate areas in an effort to protect Chinook salmon as they pass through this long section of river.

Subdistricts 5-D-Lower (from an ADF&G regulatory marker 2 miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the Hadweenzic River and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the communities of Stevens Village and Beaver. Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day.

Subdistricts 5-D-Middle (from the Hadweenzic River to the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the community of Fort Yukon. Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed and will reopen at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 15 and remain open 24-hours per day, 7 days per week.

Subdistrict 5-D-Upper (from the upstream mouth 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the communities of Circle and Eagle. Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed and will reopen at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 15 and remain open 24-hours per day, 7 days per week.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of Wood River): This area includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana. Subsistence salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays. In the Old Minto Area, subsistence fishing for salmon is open for one 5 day fishing period per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays.

Subdistricts 6-C (from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River): This area includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha. Personal use salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Recorded fishery announcements and updates are available 24 hours a day at (907) 949-1731 or 1-866-479-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the Emmonak ADF&G office at (907) 949-1320 or the Fairbanks ADF&G office at (907) 459-7274. The Emmonak ADF&G office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.

This has been an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

-end-